

Monthly SCDC Report by Lynda Harford – January 2011

SCDC continues to work towards setting its budget for the coming year and each portfolio holder has been considering revenue and capital estimates relevant to their own portfolios during the last month. There will be a budget meeting of the council on 24 February. Meanwhile as usual here is a summary of meetings that I have attended during January with an item from each which I hope you will find of interest.

06 : Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny's endorsement of the newly drafted Children & Young People's Plan was sought. Students from Cottenham, Comberton and Swavesey Village Colleges participated in consultation exercises for the development of the plan.

12: Planning Committee

One item of local interest: Erection of single storey dwelling & garage – 22 Rampton Road, Cottenham – approved.

12: Northstowe Parish Forum

No decisions yet on revision of the master plan. HCA and Gallagher are still trying to understand the implications of the A14 decision. A redacted version of the Gallagher Northstowe Delivery was promised. A good deal of information was given about the demolition of the Oakington Immigration Centre. There are representations being made regarding the number of buildings that will be retained. HCA are keen to proceed as the Treasury funding that has been made available to them must be used in this financial year.

13: Cabinet

Cabinet approved changes to SCDC's Mileage & Car Allowance Policy. The changes include an incentive to increase car sharing. This will support other measures for financial savings and also contribute towards the Council's target to reduce CO2 emissions by 10%. This target, however, looks unlikely to be met.

18: Policy & Performance PfH Meeting

New charges are to be introduced for street naming and numbering. As with other charges that councils will now be able to set for themselves [eg planning] these have to be based on the actual cost to the council and must show no element of profit. The proposed schedule of charges ranges from £25 for naming a new/renaming an existing property to £500 for 101 plots [+ £5 for each additional plot over that].

18 Finance & Staffing PfH Meeting

The PfH confirmed that pay scales for 2010/11 would be maintained at the 2009/10 rates.

19: Housing PfH Meeting

The PfH was asked to endorse the draft response to the Government's consultation paper: 'Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing'. The responses which can be viewed on the SCDC website in the papers associated with the Housing PfH's meeting generally supported current SCDC policy and the opportunity to continue in much the same way. Current policy recognises that stability of housing tenure is fundamental to promoting community cohesion and settled family life.

20: Northstowe PfH Meeting

A redacted copy of Gallagher's Northstowe Delivery Paper has now been distributed as a result of a FOI request. P Studdert's response is somewhat reassuring. It states, amongst other things, that the local authorities would not be willing to support

a piecemeal approach to development of Northstowe as it would not allow for a new secondary school and would be unlikely to attract a sufficient scale of local employment and other local services to avoid it being seen as a 'dormitory' community. Meetings are now to focus on viability and affordability of Northstowe. Gallagher will also be invited to join the newly proposed A14 task force and the joint promoters will invite the planning authorities to monthly liaison meetings.

25: Planning PfH Meeting

The PfH was asked to endorse Capital Programme items which included allocation of grant funds for Historic Buildings/War Memorials/Area Enhancement Schemes, The Parish Paths Initiative and Tree & Hedge Partnership/Parish Planting. There is local interest across the ward in these grant schemes.

25 New Communities PfH Meeting

PfH was provided with an update on progress in developing and maintaining the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership [SPEP]. New developments include support for volunteer groups to bring local businesses/organisations on stream and networked into parish based sustainable energy activity. The new Parish Energy Booklet templates are also close to completion. In depth research is to be carried out into community scale renewable energy projects including making best use of the Feed-In Tariff and the forthcoming Renewable Heat Incentive. Budget allocation has been made for extending the hours and the contract term of the Parish Energy Project Officer when a replacement for Alexandra Day is recruited.

27: Full Council Meeting

In a free vote a motion to reinstate the option to use Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort was passed.

Items of Interest:

Section 106 Reports

The quarterly section 106 reports outlining the details of agreements signed and monies received by the District Council for the previous quarter (October - December) are now available on-line and can be accessed using www.scambs.gov.uk/s106reports

Forthcoming Meetings:

Parish Council Liaison Meeting

In March the District Council's Cabinet will be holding its 6 monthly liaison meeting with parish councils to discuss topics of mutual interest. As requested by a number of parishes a substantial part of the meeting will be set aside for an open forum of questions & answers.

When: 29 March 19.00 – 20.30 *Where:* South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne

To suggest topics for discussion and confirm up to 2 attendees per parish council please contact Linda Browne linda.browne@scambs.gov.uk 01954 713477 by 14 March.

Your councillors are here to help you. Please feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope that we can help but, if we can't, we probably know a [wo]man who can.